

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. (cancelled)
2. (currently amended) The animal toenail covering according to claim 1 4 wherein said external coating of polymer has a hardness greater than that of said polymeric sheath.
3. (currently amended) The animal toe nail covering according to claim 1 4 wherein said polymeric sheath and said external coating of polymer are different colors.
4. (Currently amended) ~~The animal toe nail covering according to claim 1 wherein said polymeric sheath further comprises.~~ An animal toenail covering having an opening at one end and an internal and external shape defining a polymeric sheath generally consistent with that of an animal's toenail, said polymeric sheath comprising internal anticline cleats and an external coating of polymer encompassing at least a portion of said polymeric sheath.
5. (currently amended) The animal toenail covering according to claim 1 4 wherein said polymeric sheath further comprises a partial delamination between said polymeric sheath and a portion of said external coating of polymer.

6. (currently amended) The animal toenail covering according to claim 1 4 wherein said polymeric sheath further comprises at least an adhesive element.

7. (Previously Presented) The animal toenail covering according to claim 6 wherein said adhesive element is a liquid adhesive inserted between said polymeric sheath and said external coating of polymer.

8. (canceled)

9. (canceled)

10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) The animal toenail covering according to claim 1 4 further comprising a textured inner wall surface.

12. (canceled)

13. (canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) The animal toenail covering according to claim 6 wherein said adhesive element is an adhesive powder.

15. (Previously Presented) The animal toenail covering according to claim 6 wherein said adhesive element is an aerosol.

16. (Previously Presented) The animal toenail covering according to claim 14 wherein said adhesive powder is applied to tooling used in a dip molding process for forming said polymeric sheath.

17. (Previously Presented) The animal toenail covering according to claim 16 wherein said adhesive powder is applied to said tooling by electrostatic means.

18. (canceled)

19. (canceled)

20. (canceled)

21. (canceled)

22. (canceled)

23. (canceled)

24. (canceled)

25. (canceled)

26. (canceled)

27. (Canceled)

28. (currently amended) The polymeric animal toenail covering according to claim ~~27~~  
31 wherein said external coating has a greater hardness than said covering.

29. (currently amended )The polymeric animal toenail covering according to claim ~~27~~  
31 wherein said coating is a different color than said sheath.

30. (Currently amended) The polymeric animal toenail covering according to claim ~~27~~ 31 wherein said coating is applied to said sheath in manner whereby a void is formed between said coating and a portion of said sheath.

31. (Currently amended) ~~The polymeric animal toenail covering according to claim 27 wherein said sheath comprises~~ A polymeric animal toenail covering having an internal cavity and an external shape defining a pliable sheath generally consistent with that of an animal toenail for incasing an animal toenail said sheath comprising a plurality of pliable anticline cleats located within said internal cavity protruding inwardly and an external coating of polymer encompassing at least a portion of said sheath.

32. (Currently amended) A polymeric animal toenail covering having a closed distal end and a open proximate end said covering having an internal cavity and a external shape defining a pliable sheath generally consistent with that of an animal toenail for ~~telescopically encasing an animal toenail~~ said sheath comprising a non-uniform wall thickness having a greater thickness at said distal end than at said proximate end.

33. (Currently amended) The polymeric animal toenail covering according to claim 32 wherein said non-uniform wall thickness is comprised of multiple ~~a lamination of base~~ layers.

34. (Currently amended) The polymeric animal toenail covering according to claim 33 wherein said ~~lamination of~~ layers comprises an outer ~~layer~~ coating having a hardness greater than ~~any sub-layer~~ said base layers.

35. (Previously Presented) The polymeric animal toenail covering according to claim 33 further comprising a void located between said layers.

36. (Currently amended) The polymeric animal toenail covering according to claim 34 wherein said outer ~~layer~~ coating is a different color than that of said sub-layer.

37. (Previously Presented) The polymeric animal toenail covering according to claim 32 further comprising a plurality of anticline shaped flexible gripping elements located within said cavity pointing towards said distal end.

38. (Canceled)

39. (Canceled)